

Message Text

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17

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 INR-07 L-03 ACDA-05

NSAE-00 PA-01 SS-15 PRS-01 SP-02 USIA-06 TRSE-00

SAJ-01 NSC-05 H-02 DODE-00 /065 W

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R 131605Z NOV 75

FM AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7029

INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

AMEMBASSY ROME

CINCUSNAVEUR

USCINCEUR

USCINCLANT

USMISSION NATO

USNMR SHAPE

C O N F I D E N T I A L THE HAGUE 5834

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, MPOL, NATO, NL, GW

SUBJ: DUTCH AND GERMANS LOOK AT SPECIALIZATION POSSIBILITIES

REF: THE HAGUE 5792

1. SUMMARY: THOUGH NOTION OF POSSIBLE DUTCH-FRG SWAP OF NATO-
ASSIGNED TASKS IS ONLY IN EXPLORATORY PHASE, IT WILL BE PURSUED

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IN FURTHER DISCUSSIONS BEGINNING NEXT WEEK WHN DUTCH STATE

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE STEMERDINK VISITS BONN. END SUMMARY.

2. WHEN WE QUERIED MOD ABOUT PRESS ACCOUNTS OF DISCUSSIONS ABOUT POSSIBLE MAJOR SWAP OF FRG AND DUTCH DEFENSE TASKS (REFTEL), WE WERE TOLD THAT STORY OF VREDELING-LEBER DISCUSSIONS AT EUROGROUP IN THE HAGUE LAST WEEK BROKE PREMATURELY, MOST LIKELY FROM SPD SOURCES IN BONN. BRITISH MOD MASON WAS ALSO IN ON DISCUSSIONS, THOUGH ONLY IN A PRELIMINARY WAY. ACCORDING TO OUR SOURCE, DISCUSSIONS TOOK PLACE AGAINST BACKGROUND OF FEELING THAT, WHILE THERE HAD BEEN TALK IN NATO ABOUT RATIONALIZATION, THERE HAD SO FAR BEEN LITTLE ACTION AND THAT THEREFORE, THE TIME HAD COME TO CONSIDER AMONG INTERESTED PARTIES WHAT CONCRETE RATIONALIZATION PROJECTS MIGHT BE POSSIBLE.

3. ISSUE HAS NOW BEEN REMANDED TO STATE SECRETARY LEVEL AND WILL BE PURSUED NEXT WEEK WHEN NETHERLANDS DEFENSE STATE SECRETARY STEMERDINK VISITS HIS OPPOSITE NUMBER, MANN, IN BONN.

4. IN RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS, WE WERE TOLD THAT NETHERLANDS MISSION NATO HAD BEEN INFORMED OF FOREGOING IN A MESSAGE STRESSING THAT DISCUSSIONS ARE AT THIS STAGE ONLY OF A PRELIMINARY NATURE. NOT CLEAR WHETHER HARTOGH HAS BEEN SPECIFICALLY TOLD TO INFORM ALLIES, THOUGH IT IS LIKELY HE WILL DO SO.

5. COMMENT: IT NOW APPEARS THAT THERE MAY BE MORE TO THIS THAN MERE LUNCHEON TALK. NETHERLANDS DEFMIN VREDELING SEEMS SERIOUS ABOUT PURSUING POSSIBILITIES FOR MAJOR RESTRUCTURING OF NATO TASKS AND IS EVIDENTLY NOT SHY IN HIS THINKING. ATTRACTIVE ELEMENT TO DUTCH WOULD BE INCREASED NAVAL SHIPBUILDING PROGRAM (MORE JOBS) AND GREATER NAVAL ROLE (DUTCH TRADITION) WHILE SHEDDING EXPENSIVE ARMY TASKS (SALARIES). MOD IS UNDER IMPRESSION THAT MOD LEBER ALSO SAW POTENTIAL ADVANTAGES IN SWAP FROM GERMAN POINT OF VIEW. PRESS REPORTS REVEAL VREDELING TOLD REGIONAL LABOR PARTY MEETING NOV 12 THAT IT WAS "NOT IMPOSSIBLE" THAT CONCRETE AGREEMENTS WOULD BE REACHED "SHORTLY", CONTRASTING WITH EARLIER ASSERTIONS IN SAME ADDRESS THAT ORIGINAL REPORTS ABOUT POSSIBLE DIVISION OF DEFENSE TASKS HAD BEEN "SOMEWHAT TOO OPTIMISTIC." ALL THIS INDICATES THAT PREMATURE LEAK HAS CAUGHT VREDELING SOMEWHAT OFF GUARD AND THAT HE IS NOW ATTEMPTING TO FIND THE MOST COMFORTABLE PUBLIC POSTURE. ONE ELEMENT WILL BE CONFIDENTIAL

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HOW TO HANDLE PROBLEM OF KEEPING NATO ALLIES INFORMED, AND IT WILL BE INTERESTING TO SEE HOW HARTOGH HANDLES THIS.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: COLLECTIVE SECURITY, MILITARY POLICIES, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 13 NOV 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975THEHA05834
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750396-0697
From: THE HAGUE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19751148/aaaabrdd.tel
Line Count: 110
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 THE HAGUE 5792
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 29 APR 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <29 APR 2003 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <30 APR 2003 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: DUTCH AND GERMANS LOOK AT SPECIALIZATION POSSIBILITIES
TAGS: MARR, MPOL, NL, GE, NATO
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006